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STATE FOR NEA, NEA/IPA, NEA/PPD

WHITE HOUSE FOR PRESS OFFICE, SIT ROOM
NSC FOR NEA STAFF

SECDEF WASHDC FOR USDP/ASD-PA/ASD-ISA
HQ USAF FOR X0XX
DA WASHDC FOR SASA
JOINT STAFF WASHDC FOR PA
CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL FOR POLAD/USIA ADVISOR
COMSOCEUR VAIHINGEN GE FOR PAO/POLAD
COMSIXTHFLT FOR 019

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SUBJECT: ISRAEL MEDIA REACTION

SUBJECTS COVERED IN THIS REPORT:

[1](#)1. PM Netanyahu's Speech

[1](#)2. Iran

Block Quotes Only:

[1](#)1. PM Netanyahu's Speech

[1](#)I. "The Gratuitous Condition"

Author A. B. Yehoshua wrote in the mass-circulation, pluralist Yediot Aharonot (6/17): "The idea of two states was rejected by a majority of both Israelis and Palestinians.... We all know that the road to making that idea become manifest is paved with digressions and obstacles, but among the preconditions that were set by the prime minister in his speech at Bar Ilan University, there were some that are crucial and others that are gratuitous.... Having the Palestinian state banned from possessing heavy and sophisticated weaponry is an essential, justified and vital condition. Even the great and independent Egypt accepted the need to demilitarize the Sinai peninsula, and armament and other military restrictions have been in place for decades.... The precondition rejecting the settlement of Palestinian refugees inside the area of the State of Israel is reasonable, logical and justified. What is the point in the return of millions of refugees into the area of a state that is foreign to them insofar as pertains to its character, symbols and the nationality of a majority of its residents? To the houses and lands that no longer exist for all intents and purposes? Those refugees can be settled in their homeland, Palestine, among their fellow countrymen, under the flag of Palestine and Palestinian sovereignty.... But the condition that was set by the prime minister about Palestinian recognition of the Jewish people's right to establish a state, or the existence of a Jewish nation-was gratuitous. In my opinion, it is gratuitous to demand that the Palestinians recognize the nationality of an historic people that is thousands of years old, whose state has diplomatic relations with more than 150 countries. That demand was never set as a precondition for peace with either Egypt or Jordan, and it creates a needless obstacle.... The negotiations for the establishment of a Palestinian state are going to be fraught with troubles and obstacles in any event. Let us focus on solving the principal problems-demilitarization, settlements, borders and refugees, and leave the theological and historical questions to be solved by real peace.

II. "New Member of the Club"

Pundit Eitan Haber wrote in the mass-circulation, pluralist Yediot Aharonot (6/17): "The speech of Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu at Bar Ilan University was outstanding, perfectly structured. It was a masterpiece that pleased everyone.... But as far as we're concerned, what's the big deal?... Every prime minister "learns the material" and the tom-tom drums of politics and the media start to pound him with: a Palestinian state, a state, two states for two peoples. In this case, for Netanyahu, it wasn't simple: the current prime minister comes from the foundations of the "national home," which for generations sang "two banks for the Jordan" before laying themselves down to sleep at night.... He most likely had to do some soul searching, but he is no different from a long line of Likud princes who thought as he did for years and changed their minds. Starting from Menahem Begin, Ezer Weizman, Arik Sharon, Ehud Olmert, Tzippi Livni, Tzahi Hanegbi, Dan Meridor, Roni Milo and many other good people who, according to their current views, could easily lead center and left wing-lite parties.... He, forever, will go down in history as one of the people of the national camp who converted their religion."

III. "With Honesty and Courage"

Author David Grossman wrote in the independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz (6/17): "Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's speech was indeed, as it has been described, the speech of our lives. Our bogged-down, hopeless lives.... What the speech exposed, beyond all its juggling and parities, is the desistance we have come to, we Israelis, in the face of a reality that requires flexibility, daring and vision.... Other than acceptance of the two-state principle, which was wrung out of Netanyahu under heavy pressure and sourly expressed, this speech contained no tangible step toward a real change of consciousness. Netanyahu did not speak "honestly and courageously."... He did not look the settlers in the eye and tell them what he knows full well: that the map of the settlements contradicts the map of peace. That most of them will have to leave their homes.... I looked at him, and at the impressive data on the support he received after the speech, and I knew how far we are from peace.... I also observed the Palestinians who responded to the speech, and I thought that they are the most faithful partners to desistance and missed opportunities. Their response could have been

much wiser and more prescient than the speech itself; could they not have grasped even the drooping branch Netanyahu offered them, unwillingly, and challenged him to begin negotiations with them immediately... But the Palestinians, trapped like we are in a mechanism of contention and haggling, preferred to speak of the thousand years that would pass before they would agree to his conditions.... Netanyahu's speech... tells us... that there will be no peace here if it is not forced upon us. It is not easy to admit it, but it seems increasingly that this is the choice Israelis and Palestinians face: a just and secure peace - forced on the parties through firm international involvement, led by the United States - or war, possibly more difficult and bitter than those that came before it."

IV: "The PM at Bar-Ilan: A Damage Assessment"

Martin Sherman, the Academic Director of the Jerusalem Summit and lecturer in security studies at Tel Aviv University, wrote in the conservative, independent Jerusalem Post (6/17): "One can only wonder why Netanyahu would agree to accept an approach he has always refused to accept - just when that approach has been utterly discredited and disproved, and when more and more informed pundits - including among the Palestinians - are realizing that it is unworkable.... One of the most astonishing aspects of the ongoing phenomenon of ostensibly "hawkish" politicians adopting, once in power, "dovish" policies they previously repudiated is the fact that these policies have consistently and continuously proved a disastrous failure.... Instead of confronting today's two-state advocates with their yesterday rejection of the idea, instead of compelling them to explain their dramatic volte-face, he came to them for counsel and co-optation - however grudgingly (or not). Instead of challenging the US administration to explain its demands that Israel accept a policy the US military itself deemed would gravely undermine its security, he chose to accommodate those demands... Netanyahu chose surrender over resistance, and in so doing he put in grave danger not only his country and his people but the very rationale of Zionism itself..."

IV. "The Right's Knuckleheaded Response"

Pundit Michael Freund wrote in the conservative, independent Jerusalem Post (6/17): "ANY FAIR-MINDED OBSERVER who listened to the speech, or merely read it afterward, could not help but come away impressed by two main themes: A sincere desire for peace, alongside the undeniable historical rights which underpin the existence of the Jewish state.... With regard to the issue of a Palestinian state, Netanyahu succeeded in outwitting US President Barack Obama at his own game, using his considerable rhetorical skills to marshal an unprecedented consensus among the public.... By conditioning the creation of a Palestinian state on comprehensive demilitarization, he has shown just how utterly utopian, and unrealistic, the Left's dream truly is.... By insisting on a set of entirely reasonable demands, such as Palestinian recognition of Israel as "the nation state of the Jewish people," and the negation of a Palestinian state's ability to forge military pacts or to control its airspace, he has recast the definition of "statehood" in such a way as to reduce the danger it would pose to our existence.... Only a knucklehead could fail to see this, but that is precisely what some on the Right so excel at doing. For all their ideological savvy, many seem to lack an equal level of political skill and sophistication.... His speech on Sunday represents a subtle, yet seismic, shift in the country's stance, one that clearly places the burden on the Palestinian side to put up or shut up."

12. Iran

11. "Still Worried' Just a Little Less"

Aluf Benn, senior diplomatic commentator, wrote in the independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz (6/17): "Israel has decreased the extent of the public concern over the Iranian nuclear threat: That is the conclusion to be drawn from Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's Bar-Ilan speech and from Mossad chief Meir Dagan's remarks to the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee yesterday. Netanyahu has returned to the positions of his predecessors, and placed responsibility for Iran on the international community.... Dagan said the Iranian bomb was a significant threat, but only in another five years and only if there were no technical glitches.... If Dagan was speaking forthrightly and not just using the parliamentary platform for a feint, the Iranian bomb has now receded beyond Netanyahu's term in office. The cabinet will not have to decide in

the next few months whether to attack Iran. Israeli intelligence assessments are in line with American ones, and this means U.S. President Barack Obama can breathe easy: Netanyahu will not surprise him with an attack on Iran.

IV. "Israelis for Ahmadinejad"

Aluf Benn, senior diplomatic commentator, wrote in the independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz (6/17): "The prize for this week's most stupid remark has to go to the officials, officers and experts who described Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad as the candidate Israel prefers to win the election in Iran, and were even happy he did... Bush, the friendly president who gave Israel a green light in Lebanon and Gaza and to bomb Syria, did not allow Israel to attack Iran's nuclear facilities. Barack Obama is specifically demanding that Israel does not attack, and that it does not spring any surprises on the United States. The presentation of Ahmadinejad as Hitler and Iran as a police state a la "1984" ignores the internal pressure in Iran for greater democracy and openness. Those who see Iran only through its centrifuges will also find it hard to understand and accept the Obama approach, which seeks dialogue with Tehran's rulers and smiles at the Muslim world. To the Israeli establishment this amounts to kowtowing to the neighborhood bully.... Obama was right not to intervene. He did not accept the results of the election but he did not publicly declare support for the protesters. Thus he gave the reformists room, without seeming to be pulling the strings from afar. It is too early to tell how events will pan out in Tehran, if the regime will really mellow, but the demonstrations offer a chance of change in Iran for the first time in 30 years.... Netanyahu has internalized the strategic change that Obama generated. He quickly responded to the Cairo speech with agreement to a Palestinian state, and also changed his public position on Iran: Instead of threatening war and talking about the Holocaust, he returned to Ariel Sharon and Ehud Olmert's approach that the problem is international and not only Israel's. Perhaps after meeting Obama, Netanyahu understands the reality better than his officers and his officials.

CUNNINGHAM